97-84032-18

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[Washington, D.C.?]

[1917?]

97-84032-18
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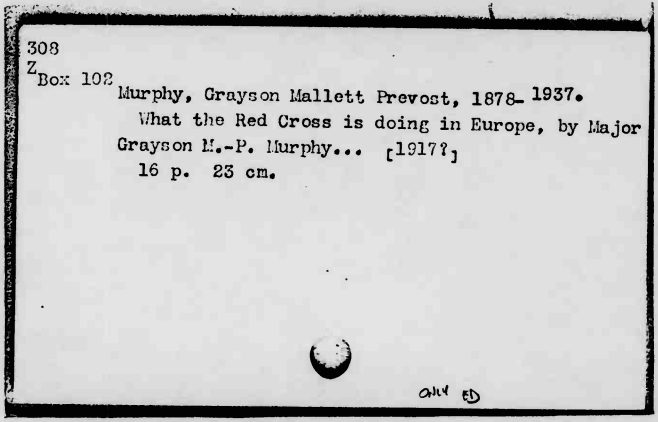

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 2-28-97 INITIALS: MS

TRACKING # : 22239

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WHAT The Red Cross Is Doing In Europe

By
MAJOR GRAYSON M-P. MURPHY
Formerly
American Red Cross Commissioner to Europe

What the Red Cross Is Doing in Europe

By Major Grayson M-P. Murphy
Formerly
American Red Cross Commissioner to Europe

THE work that we have carried on on the other side has not been that of an organization run by one man. It has been a big partnership, and everyone of the partners is entitled to his share of the credit.

Now, the first thing that we have got to understand about our Red Cross work, or about any other kind of work that we ever go into, is the fundamental thing on which the work is based; and the fundamental thing on which our work is based is just one thing, and that is: *the absolute necessity of winning this war.*

Why the War Must Be Won

Now, I don't know whether you know why it is necessary to win the war. I didn't when I left the United States. I had an idea that we were going and that our army was going and that our country was embarking on one of the most magnificent, unselfish crusades in the world. I could see nothing that was really practical for us in winning the war. I mean by that, that there was no practical *material* advantage. I knew we had to go in the war to save our souls. I knew we had to go in the war to keep our standing before the world, but I didn't realize that there was a practical necessity for our being in the war.

I tell you my feelings have changed so much that I cannot imagine what led me to hold the state of mind that I held that day when we sailed from New York. When you are "over there," and when you see what this war means, and when you see what a half peace or half victory will mean, you shudder to think of the fact that our people at home, on whom the winning of this war is now depending, may not realize the absolute necessity for a victory.

I want to ask you to consider for a moment the fact that *up to this day Germany is entirely victorious in this war*, that any

peace that is made today on the basis of today's conditions or on the basis of the *status quo ante* would be practically a complete victory for Germany and for the German idea.

Germany has lost nothing in this war except blood. She has fought her war on the territory of others. She has drawn from the territory of others vast supplies of materials and vast sums of money. She has had between forty and fifty million people working for her for practically no wage—really as slaves. She has established her cursed hold on Austria, on Turkey and on Bulgaria, and she has at her feet murdered Serbia and unfortunate Roumania.

If the War Ended Today

If the war ended today, with France ruined as she is in the north, held in such a way that you hardly dare to think of it, her man power depleted; with Belgium wrecked; with Great Britain fearfully damaged—not alone in man power but in the losses of her great sea fleet and in the money that she spent not only to maintain herself but her allies in this war; with Russia crumbled, disorganized, an absolute prey to the devilish machinations and ingenuity of Germany, then you must realize, I say you *must* realize, that the world would not have a chance to live *except as Germany said that the world should live*, and our country would have to anticipate the time when Germany would cross with us, when her great military and naval power could be thrown against us, and when we, with those habits of unpreparedness which are native to our people and from which we can never hope to escape, would meet her and go down. *If we cannot beat Germany now when we are fighting together, we can never beat her single-handed.*

Now, you don't know what these German people are, I believe. We always thought of Germans in the old days as a kindly people—professors smoking pipes and drinking beer, absent-minded fellows that left their umbrellas around in places. They were good citizens; they were fine people.

I want to tell you what an English woman who is connected with the Government of Great Britain and is representing Great Britain officially told me—that when there was a threat of a German invasion of England, that the women in that part of England carried about with them poison and had selected places where they could drown themselves to save themselves from what they would face if German troops landed on British soil.

Germany Stops at Nothing

I cannot—well, I cannot begin to describe to you the horrible, brutal, beastly, official things that Germany consistently has done, not in isolated cases but generally, to the women and children and the poor old suffering people in the countries where she set her dreadful foot. She has stopped at nothing.

British officers told me of seeing their wounded piled in heaps and hand grenades thrown in the midst and exploded among them as they lay there. British officers have told me of the men being taken as prisoners through Germany, and German women coming and offering them a glass of water and spitting in the glass as they handed it to them.

I came back across the water with a prominent British officer and statesman. He told me of a friend of his who lay wounded and suffering horribly in front of the German trenches. He laid there for a day and a half or two days suffering terribly, and the Germans came out at night, stood around him and scoffed at him and kicked him and made fun of him. Then they went away and left him. Some of his own people went out at the risk of their lives and brought him in and before he died he told them of these things.

Do you think that the men in that British regiment would be willing to make a half peace with Germany? Do you think that the Canadians who went in the trenches and found their officers crucified—that those men will ever make a half peace with Germany?

I tell you, it is only a short time before our boys who are over there now are going to be suffering those same things, and you have got to understand it here, and you have got to build and build and sacrifice, and pay whatever it may cost to beat that beast.

What the War Means to the French People

Now, this war is not a war of armies. It is a war of nations. There isn't a man, a woman, or a child in Great Britain, in Belgium, in France or in Italy, that is not a factor in this war.

I tell you that if you should go, as I have gone, about those ruined districts in France and had seen little children, four and five years old, driving in the herds at night, had seen little boys coming down the road—little bits of tots—with their arms full of fagots that they were accumulating against the winter, had seen old men and old women working in the fields until it was so

dark that as you looked you could just make out those vague ghostly forms gathering in the crops for France, you would realize what this war is, what this war means.

I have passed through those towns and looked in the windows at night where you would see a little here and there, and they were always working, working, working, working, to carry on this war. It is not the armies of France that are the essential thing to France in this war, nor the armies of England, nor of the other countries. Those armies will do their part and do it to a finish, *if they are supported by the people behind them.*

The great crying need in Europe today is to build up the spirit and keep up the spirit of the people behind the lines, and it is that great work which the Red Cross—thanks not to us on the other side, but to you on this side—has performed and which has been the largest single factor of our help since our entry into the war.

Now, I am going to sketch for you very briefly, since I have given you the fundamental facts, what we have done, and you will now understand why we did it.

Working in a Country Stripped by War

In the first place we came to a country that was stripped by three years of war. There is very little you can buy on the other side in the way of supplies and material. There is very little you can get hold of in the way of human power. There are no stenographers, no telephone operators, no people to run errands or keep furnace fires going or anything of that sort. We had therefore to import practically all the labor we had to use in our undertaking. We also had to get together supplies from places other than in Europe itself.

We started immediately the construction of a great system of transportation and warehouses. The theory of the organization was this: That there were only two things which were essential to our success—you could strip everything else away but two things we had to have—one of them was goods, materials, supplies, on the ground; and the other was some way to move them. And if we had those two things, well, we could put it up to anybody to do the rest. So we started our warehouse system.

The working out of a warehouse system in France was a very complicated matter, for the reason that the Government has occupied practically all the points that are desirable for warehouse sites. But we have a system of warehouses beginning at

eight of the principal ports in France and at each we have a warehouse to take care of our goods when they arrive.

In Paris we have great base warehouses, and all along the front, particularly in Belgium where they are under shell fire some of the time, all along there and all the way down to and along the French line; from there down to Italy and along the Italian line; at the seaports and railway routes we have our advance warehouses; all of which are crammed with stuff at points where we can get hold of it when trouble comes.

Ambulances and Motor Trucks for Quick Action

To supplement this warehouse system we have about five hundred ambulances and motor trucks which are concentrated also in Paris and at various points in our territory so that in an emergency we can use them to get quick action at any point on that front.

We had to establish a purchasing department which has been magnificently built up under Mr. Stanley Field, of Chicago.

We had to establish a great department to keep track of all the funds we had to handle.

We have an engineering and architectural department which planned the buildings and hospitals and rest stations which we have to erect.

You may not know it, but we have actually under construction now about 100 great barracks in different parts of France which are used partly by our own army as recreation huts in connection with hospitals, for storehouses, and in connection with our work with the various foreign armies.

We have our great department of civil affairs which handles—well our department of civil affairs today is carrying through the following things: 1st, our work with the children of France. It is our hope that in co-operation with the French Government we may be able to reduce in due course the number of deaths of young infants in France from 80,000 a year to 40,000 a year. Our experts think it can be done. Our people are caring today, in one way or another, for 50,000 children in France. We have hospitals where they are cared for.

For Tots Too Young to Wear Gas Masks

We have homes at Toule for the initiation of which we owe a great debt of gratitude to the "Home for French Wounded."

These tots are brought back from the districts where they are under gas fire, and they are too small to wear gas masks

and consequently they would be killed. We have 500 from there. From Toule our ambulances move around in the country, and we hold clinics where our doctors and nurses care for the sick, particularly children, but also for the civilian sick who happen to be in that district and who cannot otherwise get treatment because all the doctors have been called into the service.

At Neuilly we have 1,000 children from Belgium, children on the point of breaking down owing to the lack of nourishment and care. In conjunction with the Belgian Government we have taken them out and have placed them in homes established and supported by us. One thousand more are coming as soon as arrangements can be made to repatriate them.

The French Government has turned over to us for examination and care the little children repatriated through Avignon. These children when they come there are broken down in health through lack of nourishment. We give them treatment at Avignon and at Lyons. If they have contagious diseases or are in conditions of contagion, we concentrate them at our contagious hospital, which is near Lyons.

Decent Housing for the Refugees

With the refugees we are carrying through, again in strict co-operation with the French Government, a great work, namely to get these people out of the wretched concentrated condition of life which has been forced upon them, and to give them decent housing conditions. And the French Government has recently requested us to establish with their representative at Avignon a central committee, and asked us to have branch committees co-operating with the French officials throughout France, so that when the repatriated people come in, our committee and the French Government's representatives decide on where they can be best taken care of, with a mind to their future condition.

They are sent there, and then the French Government and our committee there take hold of them, and we arrange with the French Government for furniture, supplies, tools, or something, so that the poor people can take care of themselves in a respectable way and not be a drag on a country suffering as no other country in the history of the world has ever suffered, unless it is a country which has been overrun like Serbia

Checking Tuberculosis

In conjunction with the Rockefeller Foundation, we are conducting a work against tuberculosis which is unparalleled in the history of the world. You know how France has suffered from tuberculosis, from their people living in these unwholesome dugouts and the other conditions they now live in. Tuberculosis has developed in the trenches, too; and the troops are sent back to their homes carrying the germs of these dread diseases with them.

We have been able, working with the Rockefeller Foundation, to put into effect a system of education in France, a system to care for bad cases in sanatoriums, and a system which will lead to the establishment of a great system of 300 dispensaries throughout France, with visiting nurses attached, which in the opinion of Dr. Farrand, who is pre-eminent in the world in the fight against tuberculosis, is going to lead to the gaining of as much ground in France in four years as was gained in the United States in fifteen years.

I cannot let this subject pass without expressing the great debt of gratitude that not only the Red Cross but France and the world owe to the Rockefeller Foundation for its magnificent work.

I will not bother you by going into what we did with the mutilated soldiers and the reformés and the educational system we are putting in, as for instance the agricultural training school where we take the mutilated and train men to use American farm machinery and teach them agricultural methods which they with their poor broken bodies can carry out.

Putting the Little Children on their Feet Again

Nor will I take up the little children who come back, all trembling. We are putting them on their feet again and teaching them useful work by classes in carpentry, which they dearly love as play, and which equips them for useful work in the future. If you think what those little children have to face, I think you will believe as I do, that the work we have done with them has been the most beautiful work in the world.

I remember I was at one time outside Popering, and I went to a little home there which was maintained by the Countess Vanderstein for refugees. It was a hospital and a home. I saw soldiers—a mutilated soldier walking across the lawn, and

he was leading by the hand a little boy about eight years old who had a bandage over his eyes. That child had been blinded by a German shell, and they had to take out both of his eyes.

He did not know he was blind. He thought it was the bandage; and even when they took the bandage off he still thought there was something tied over his eyes. He was very happy, and had no idea of the seriousness of the situation. While I was standing talking to this soldier, the little fellow put his little bandaged head down on the ground and turned a somersault. There is so much of that spirit over there.

The Canteen System

In our military division we are carrying on a great, an extraordinary work with the French, with the Belgians, with the Italians, and to a certain minor extent with the British and with our own people. In the first place we have our system of canteens. We have our rolling canteens which are operating right up in the trenches, where we give the soldiers hot drinks as they go into the communicating trenches and when they come out, and in December we served hot drinks of that kind to 225,000 soldiers.

Our men worked out under shell fire all the time, and when the gas comes over them they wear masks; they are great pals with the soldiers, let me tell you, and the American propaganda they are carrying on there is one of the finest pieces of such work in the world.

In the old days a French soldier would come back on his seven days' leave, he would come back from the trenches covered with vermin—everybody has them over there, officers and all—and they go to a junction point for cars to accommodate them and take them home. Those junction points are equipped for 75 people, and sometimes there were 4,000 of these people waiting at a junction point, waiting sometimes 24 and sometimes 48 hours. During that time they slept on the ground, and they got very little food, and what little food they did get was from people who sold it at high prices.

They brought to their homes the vermin which would spread disease among the civil population behind the lines, and also the discouraging atmosphere which they carried owing to the conditions through which they passed on their way home. They went back to the lines again from their homes through the same channels.

Hot Meals for French Soldiers

In conjunction with the French Government, we are feeding —not giving drinks and sandwiches—but giving hot meals to 1,000,000 French soldiers every month.

Now, we have not only given them the meals, but we have these great recreation halls where they sit and have their dinners and sit and talk and make merry. Then we have the big barracks like lumbermen's barracks, with bunks along the walls, on plans that we and the French Government agreed on. Then we have shower baths where they can bathe and we are putting in a system of disinfecting machinery so that the men's clothes, while they are bathing, are run through this disinfecting machinery where the vermin are killed. Then they get their clothes and go home in a different frame of mind from before.

These people were so glad that they did not use the bunks at first, but they sat and talked and sang and wondered at what America was doing for them. I have in my pocket here a statement from a general officer of the French Army. He said:

"The only thing that matters in this war is to beat the Boche, and to accomplish this the all important factor is the morale of the men. This you have done much to uphold, and the atmosphere you create is more valuable than even you can realize.

"Your work is that of maintaining the morale of the Americans and the French and the Allies, and I wish to thank you in our name and that of General Petain. Your canteens have been well run and kept up to a high standard. Let the men know that they are being cared for not as men only, but as friends; that makes them prefer your canteens to the wine shops. The morale has never been better than now. I need not tell you I feel strongly on this subject, and I am talking to you as man to man. I am speaking not only for myself but for General Petain. He feels as I do toward you and your work and he endorses every word I have said."

American Women's Work in Canteens

In connection with our canteen work I cannot continue without speaking of the magnificent piece of work which has been done by one of the finest American women I ever knew—Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt. Mrs. Vanderbilt has worked like a wheelhorse not only at the American ambulances, but at all of our canteens; and when we went to Italy and I wired and asked

ner to come to Italy and take charge of the American Women's Canteen over there, she got out of a sick bed and came there and did one of the prettiest pieces of work you ever saw.

We have 100 American women working at these canteens and the way they work and the courage they show, and the long hours they endure when it is necessary, make one of the finest tributes not only to American women but to women all over the world, that has ever been seen. The only trouble we have with those women is that they are always trying to get up where they can get shelled.

We have in addition to these canteens, canteens which we are operating at the principal railway stations, in Paris as well as outside of Paris, where we furnish sandwiches, cigarettes and little American flags, and things of that sort to a great number of men every day.

We are furnishing supplies to about 3,500 French hospitals, medical and hospital supplies. We are operating a number of hospitals in France for the benefit of the French army and the civilian population.

Rest Stations, Oxide Gas, Ice Plants for Our Boys

We are carrying on for our own army a number of important rest stations where our soldiers are taken care of if anything happens to them on their way from the ports to other permanent stations. We have accumulated in France an almost incalculable store of hospital supplies of every description; practically every kind of supplies that can be used for our men; and we have these not in Paris, but we are crowding them all out to the points near where our men will go in. And as far as it is humanly possible for the Red Cross to care for our sick and wounded, provision has been made to do it.

We are installing a plant to furnish nitrous oxide gas. We will manufacture and furnish it there to all our hospitals. It is a gas which can be used as an anaesthetic in cases where the patient is too weak to take ether; and Dr. Crile, who is one of the greatest authorities on that subject in the world, is of the opinion that the use of this gas in our army will save many lives of our boys who would die under ordinary anaesthetic.

We are putting in a system of movable ice plants, which can be used to manufacture ice for our soldiers in the summer time. We are furnishing them with all kinds of supplies which are made up by the women of this country; and you do not know what it

means to the man over there to get a woolen muffler, or sweater, or good warm socks, especially in weather such as this. You do not understand over here what a sock is.

And in Belgium we are doing practically the same work as in France.

The Emergency Job in Italy

In Italy our job was an emergency job. At the time of the retreat in Italy the poor country was knocked to pieces. Never anywhere in the world except on a football field after an end-run, where they had made a score on you, have I seen people so demoralized.

The army was in complete retreat—or rather I should say rout. There were 500,000 or 600,000 refugees streaming into districts which were already very short of the necessary supplies of life. The question was not whether the Piave line could be held—no one high in supreme command thought that it could be held. The only question was how soon they were to retreat to Adage and the Po; and if they came there it might have meant that Italy would be lost to the Allies.

If ever there was a time for someone to pat a fellow on the back and get him to "buck up and do something," it was in Italy when the Piave line was taken.

All kinds of funny conditions existed over there; and the only country from which a real word of encouragement could come then was the United States; and the United States could not speak it. Congress was not in session. And we could not do the only thing which would have meant anything to Italy at that time, and that was to declare war on Austria. A propaganda was under way to the effect that America was not really in the war, as we had not declared war on Austria; that we were not well disposed toward Italy; that America had done nothing but lend money to Italy and take back an obligation with interest attached. There was no official organization that could speak, but the American Red Cross spoke, and she spoke so that she could be heard.

Our Flag Flies Over all Italy

Our work resulted in the display of the American flag from one end of Italy to the other. Carl Taylor, who was in charge of the organization in Italy, performed one of the greatest pieces of work I ever saw.

It was so great that when we finally did declare war on Austria, the Prime Minister rose in the Chamber of Deputies to make that solemn speech, in which he announced it, he said in the speech:

"The vigor and the efficiency with which the American Red Cross has acted in this crisis may be taken as an earnest of the vigor and efficiency we may expect from America in a military way now that she is in the war."

Now, how we did it I am not going to say. I am not going to spoil a sort of best-seller just arrived from Italy which will be published and sent to you soon, but it was a very interesting and fine piece of work, and if you had seen it you would have been very proud of it.

Work in Great Britain

In Great Britain we are carrying on a large work, and one which is having an excellent effect. We are operating a number of hospitals, supporting a number of good works in Great Britain in co-operation with the British Red Cross and the British Government for the manufacture of supplies for the use of our troops; and the co-operation we have had in this war—not only the Red Cross but the army—from Great Britain is one of the most beautiful things I have seen in the world.

And I want to tell you something of the spirit of these people; it is something that is sublime. There is no wailing in England. You read the death notices, and one half of them run "In proud and loving Memory."

You are there in England on a clear night with the moon out, and the women look up at the sky and say, "Well, it is a clear night, there will be a raid; but we will be mightly glad of it, as it will help them in Flanders."

You do not find any women using influence to get gasolene to run their motor cars, or to get extra coal; they are playing the game, and right down to the hilt.

Working with Sister Societies in France

Now, I think I have pretty nearly exhausted you, and my subject is not started yet. But I wish to say three things before I stop. In the first place: I want to express the great appreciation we have in France for the co-operation we have had from our sister societies there. I cannot commend too strongly the spirit

we carried in those dreadful days when we were neutral, when we worked in England and France and kept the light of America burning, no matter how dimly, on that side of the water.

I do not know of a single important American organization that existed in France when we came with which we are not working there today in full and complete accord. Many of them have come in with us as part of our organization, for instance, as Mrs. Bliss's distributing service, the American Fund for French Wounded, and The Surgical Dressing Organization. Not a single important organization which existed there when we went over, but is now a member of the family.

Haste on America's Part Vital

In Great Britain a magnificent piece of work has been done by Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, and the work carried on there and the success we have had has been infinitely more due to the work of Mrs. Reid than all the rest of us put together. The women who have come here to work have done magnificent things not only in canteen work, but in the administration and carrying out of the general work we are doing. Over there, in our organization, we have American women and they are doing things with an inspiration and an efficiency which set a standard for every man in the show.

Now there is one last thing: I am going back to France on Saturday. I came here with a very buoyant feeling about America; *I am going back a good deal worried.* There is no one save those on the other side who realize what America means to our Allies in this war.

The great question is, How soon are you coming? *How soon are you coming?*

They are counting on us everywhere, and if there is any break on our part, I do not know what will happen.

You women are the greatest power in this country in this war. I talked with a prominent Southerner who was alive at the time of the Civil War. I said to him, "They talk about suffering in this war. Why, the men in the Southern Army fought under conditions of food and supply that were worse than in any country in this war today."

He said "Yes, you know why it was?"

I said, "No."

He said, "It was because they were ashamed to go back to the women beaten."

Now, you women are sending your husbands and your brothers and your sons over there—and many of them will die over there, and a great many of them are going to die that might be saved, but they will not be saved unless we carry the war through in the most efficient manner possible.

Our War as Much as France's

This is a war of every one of you. It is as much the war of the United States over here as it is in France, and every one of you has as much active interest in the war as if we were an old and savage tribe, and our village was surrounded by an enemy, and some of our tribe were piking the enemy with spears at the walls, and the others were making spears and arrows which were being carried to the front. If the enemy gets into your village, you are done.

If there are men in this country who, to save their selfish position or their selfish fortunes or their selfish happiness and pride, who are standing in the way of the proper development of an organization to fight this war, they are worse than Germans.

Now, let me tell you something about men: Men are all right up to a certain point, but there is a point where the man stops because he is considerate of another man. You will seldom get a man to criticise other men. He will shrug his shoulders and things of that kind, but women, when they make up their minds to a thing, they are not that way.

And if there is one thing I would like to feel sure would happen in this country, it is that our women would make up their minds that this was their war.

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